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Congress of the United States

JOINT COMMITTEE ON ATOMIC ENERGY

September 5, 1961

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Dear Mac:

Attached is a copy of Mr.

Holifield's statement on the President's
announcement on resumption of testing.

Best regards.

Sincerely,

Jim Ramey

Mr. McGeorge Bundy
Special Assistant to the President
The White House

Enclosure

Statement by Congressman Chet Holifield (D., Calif.), Chairman,
Joint Committee on Atomic Energy, Commenting on President's
Announcement on Resumption of Nuclear Testing

The following statement was prepared for delivery on the floor of the House:

"Mr. Speaker. I wish to commend the President for his statement on the resumption of nuclear weapons testing.

"In a speech I gave in the House on June 14 of this year, I recommended that the United States resume weapons testing. However, I was careful to state that the timing of such a decision should be up to the President - because of the many factors involved.

"I reviewed the history of our futile negotiations with the Soviets. I pointed out that in view of Soviet intransigence, we should reappraise our position on testing. At that time I stated:

"Of course, the key question is what effect the test ban is having on our weapons development program relative to the Soviet program.

"Undoubtedly, any weapons development program as sophisticated as the U. S. or Russian could be improved in various significant respects, if weapons testing of various sorts were undertaken. Thus, it has been publicly stated that the United States' program could be assisted by testing through: (1) getting lighter weight to yield ratios for warheads for our missiles; (2) developing an anti-missile missile; (3) developing improved small yield weapons; and (4) improving safety features of weapons.

"But, more important, in my judgment, is the ultimate general effect on weapons technology of a continuing test ban. It will inevitably stifle developments undreamed of at the present time. Concepts are now being considered by our scientists which could be as revolutionary as the H-bomb in 1949."

"I then reviewed a number of factors affecting our decision to resume testing. Many of these considerations have become moot in view of the Soviet unilateral decision to resume atmospheric testing, despite their protestations to the contrary in the past.

"I believe the sober consideration given by the President and his advisors to the resumption question--both before and after the recent Soviet decision--has done much to improve the U. S. posture in world opinion. However I must say that the

comments of most of the neutral leaders were somewhat restrained to say the least. Does anyone believe they would have been as restrained with the United States, if we had unilaterally resumed testing?

'In conclusion I would like to quote the last brief paragraphs of my June 14 address:

"In his message to Congress on May 25, 1961, President Kennedy stated that 'we intend to go the last mile in patience to secure this gain (a test ban treaty) if we can.'

"But there comes a time when our extended inaction may be taken as a sign of weakness, by our friends as well as our adversaries.

"In my personal opinion we have about "gone the last mile." I am hopeful that the President will arrive at a wise judgment on this important matter within a few weeks. He has access to all the national and international information on this problem. In the last analysis it is his responsibility to make the final decision. He must be the judge as to the timing and the method of procedure. People who are less well informed and less responsible for the effects of this grave decision should exercise restraint in this period of somber consideration. I believe the Congress and the people are ready to support the President at a time and in a method of his choosing."

"Mr. Speaker. The President has now made his decision. I feel certain that the Congress and the people of the United States and free world will support this decision.

"Mr. Speaker. We have gone 'the last mile'!"

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UNITED STATES
ATOMIC ENERGY COMMISSION
WASHINGTON 25, D. C.

September 8, 1961

Honorable McGeorge Bundy
Special Assistant to the President
The White House

Dear Mr. Bundy:

At the request of Chairman Seaborg we have drawn together a quick compilation of Soviet statements on the hazards of nuclear weapons testing. We have made no evaluation of the statements. These statements illustrate Soviet duplicity. However, I think it is important that any use of the statements not imply that we regard them as accurate or that fallout hazards are necessarily as the Soviets have at times represented them to be.

Included are those quotations which were most readily available to us. We are continuing to search for additional statements and will forward any in the next several days which might be of particular significance. We have not yet found any strong Soviet comments on fallout hazards which were made in 1961.

A copy has gone to Mr. Salinger.

Sincerely yours,

Dwight A. Ink

Dwight A. Ink
Assistant General Manager

Enclosure

RECENT DATA ON C^{14} CONCENTRATION IN THE ATMOSPHERE

Yu. V. Sivintsev - Translated from Atomnaya Energiya,
Volume 8, No. 6, pages 573-575 - June 1960

"In contrast to atomic and uranium fission bombs, where the basic radiation is associated with the concentration in one area of long-lived radioactive fragments, Sr^{90} in the first instance, taken into the human organism with the resultant formation of malignant neoplasms, the pure hydrogen (deuterium-tritium) fusion bomb is dangerous to both contemporary and future generations because of the formation of mutant genes in response to irradiation of the gonads by β -particles emitted by the isotope C^{14} . Assuming a linear dose dependence of the genetic effect, and also assuming that the spontaneous rate of mutation in humans is 10% due to natural irradiation, O. I. Leipunskii reached the conclusion that the total number of genetic victims from the explosion of a 10-megaton pure hydrogen bomb comes to 49,000 persons, as against 41,000 persons for an explosion of a conventional nuclear bomb."